Claims

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   A method for requesting and receiving medical patient test results using a remote data input terminal in communication with a server-based lab test message computer, the method comprising:

entering patient identification information for a medical patient test requested to be performed into the remote data input terminal;

entering test identification information for identifying the medical patient test requested to be performed into the remote data input terminal;

labeling a test sample collected to perform the requested medical patient test with the patient identification information and the test identification information;

transmitting the patient identification information and the test identification information to the lab test message processor in order to request the medical patient tests to be performed upon the collected test sample;

receiving a test result message containing test results for the requested medical patient test; and

displaying the test results from the requested medical patient test on the remote data input terminal.

2.   The method according to claim 1, wherein the remote data input terminal comprises a hand-held computer having a wireless communications interface for communicating with the lab test message processor.

3.   The method according to claim 2, wherein the remote data input terminal further comprises a bar code scanner for receiving data input.

4.   The method according to claim 3, wherein the remote data input terminal further comprises a pen-based user input screen for accepting input from a user.

5.   The method according to claim 1, wherein the entering patient identification information comprises scanning a patient bar code containing a unique patient ID.

6.   The method according to claim 5, wherein the patient bar code is located on a patient bracelet worn by the patient.

7.   The method according to claim 5, wherein the patient bar code is located on a patient chart.

8.   The method according to claim 1, wherein the patient identification information and the test identification information comprises one or more bar codes.

9.   The method according to claim 1, wherein the method further comprises:

identifying one or more recipients for the test result message; and

transmitting the one or more recipient's identity to the lab test message processor for use when sending the test results to desired recipients.

10.   The method according to claim 9, wherein the method further comprises:

identifying one or more additional recipients for the test result message; and

forwarding the test result message to the one or more additional recipients.

11. The method according to claim 10, wherein the forwarding the test result message comprises:

transmitting the identity of the one or more additional recipients to the lab test message processor; and

instructing the lab test message processor to send the test result message to the additional recipients.

12. The method according to claim 11, wherein the displaying of test results comprises:

displaying one or more test result messages;

accepting search commands for additional test result messages corresponding to the search commands; and

displaying the additional test result messages corresponding to the search commands.

13. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for the method recited in claim 1.

14. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for the method recited in claim 12.

15. A remote data input terminal having a user interface screen in communication with a server-based lab test message processor for requesting a receiving medical patient test results, the remote data input terminal comprising:

a user interface module for controlling the operation of the terminal and storing data within a test request and test result data store;

a user sign-in module for accepting user identification and authentication information needed to set up the operation of the remote data input terminal;

a patient processing module for entering patient identification information to generate a test request message to the lab test message computer needed to order a medical patient test;

a test results interface module for receiving a test request message containing the medical test results corresponding to the test request message; and

a message transfer module for performing data communications between the remote data input terminal and the lab test message processor.

16. The remote data input terminal according to claim 15, wherein the remote data input terminal is a hand-held computer having a wireless communications module for communicating with the lab test message computer.

17. The remote data input terminal according to claim 16, wherein the hand-held computer accepts pen-based input data generated using pen strokes from a stylus upon a user interface screen.

18. The remote data input terminal according to claim 15, wherein the remote data input terminal further comprises a user ID scanning module for accepting input for the patient identification information and the test identification information.

19. The remote data input terminal according to claim 18, wherein the user ID scanning module comprises a scanning module for scanning bar codes.

20. The remote data input terminal according to claim 19, wherein the scanning module is an integral part of the remote data input terminal.

21.   The remote data input terminal according to claim 19, wherein the scanning

module is an attached peripheral electronically connected to the remote data input terminal.